

Requires Terrorists to be tried as enemy Combatants, not Common Criminals

Bill Co-Sponsored by leading Experts in Congress

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) announced today he has drafted legislation requiring terrorists to be tried as enemy combatants, not common criminals. Buchanan’s bill, to be introduced in the House next week, will mandate that any terrorist who attacks the United States or its people be interrogated, prosecuted and tried in military court, not civilian court.

“The American people are outraged that foreign terrorists who have declared war on America are being tried in civilian courts,” Buchanan said. “Terrorists with ties to known terror organizations such as al Qaeda should not be afforded the same constitutional protections as American citizens, nor should sensitive homeland security and intelligence information be publicized in open, civilian court proceedings.”

His bill is cosponsored by two leading, national experts; the vice chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) and the vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon (R-CA).

McKeon said, “Rep. Buchanan’s efforts will make our country safer. Terrorists who are engaged in a war against America must be treated as enemy combatants—not common criminals—and should be prosecuted in accordance with the laws of warfare.”

Congressman Smith added, “Trying terrorists in military commissions at Guantanamo Bay is the only way to protect the American people. Bringing them to the U.S. risks giving terrorists the same constitutional rights as citizens. The Obama Administration should treat terrorists as terrorists and try them in military tribunals at Gitmo.”

Two high-profile terrorists with links to al Qaeda are being processed through civilian courts instead of a military tribunal. The most recent is the al Qaeda-trained Nigerian terrorist (name) who tried to blow up a U.S. airplane in Detroit on Christmas Day. The other is (name), the mastermind behind the September 11 attacks that killed more than 3,000 people in New York City.

“Using military tribunals to interrogate, prosecute, and sentence foreign terrorists who conspire, attempt, or attack the United States and its people is a far better way to handle these kinds of sensitive matters,” Buchanan said. “Military tribunals protect U.S. intelligence sources and methods from being revealed in open court.”

The decision to prosecute these terrorists in civilian court was made by the Attorney General and the Justice Department. Buchanan’s bill, the Military Tribunals for Terrorists Act, would take away the discretion to try terrorists in civilian court and mandate that they always be treated as enemy combatants and brought before a military tribunal.

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